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ABSTRACT

Capturing what has been learned over the past several years about the characteristics of effective Even Start Family Literacy programs, this book offers a guide for self-review by programs for the purpose of staff development and program improvement. The book also provides a focus for designing local program evaluations, serves as an outline of important program characteristics for those new to Even Start, and gives potential collaborators information about Even Start. The first section of the book presents background information. The second section presents indicators of quality within 10 major topic areas (integration of components, collaboration, recruitment, parent-child interactions and parenting education, home visiting, adult education/adult literacy, early childhood program settings, retention of families, transitions, and staff development) with many interconnections across the topics as appropriate for an integrated program. Each topic area begins with a statement of the primary goal or challenge associated with that topic or component, followed by statements of conditions associated with quality programs, and a "snapshot" description from a family literacy project to illustrate how the quality considerations are implemented in practice. Contains 50 references. A self-assessment tool using the quality considerations described in the book is attached. (RS)

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US

GUIDE TO QUALITY

Even Start

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

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GUIDE TO QUALITY Even Start

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS

Prepared For:

EVEN START PROGRAM
OFFICE OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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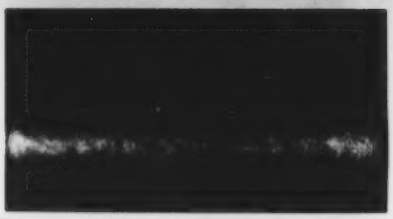

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SECTION I
BACKGROUND

Even Start and the National Education Goals

Purpose and Uses of the Guide

Even Start Core Values

EVEN START AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

The purpose of the Even Start Family Literacy program is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families through the integration of early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic education or English as a second language), and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. Under the Even Start Family Literacy Program, the Secretary of Education provides Federal financial assistance for family-centered education projects to help parents gain the literacy and parenting skills they need to become full partners in the education of their young children, ages birth through seven, and to assist those children in reaching their full potential as learners. Even Start is implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services.

Even Start assists children and adults from low-income families to achieve challenging state content standards and student performance standards. It also supports education reform by addressing four of the eight National Education Goals to be achieved by the year 2000.

GOAL 1 All children in America will start school ready to learn.

GOAL 3 All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.

GOAL 5 Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

GOAL 8 Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

All four goals are equally important in Even Start. Even Start's design is based on the premise that the three core components (adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting education) build on one another and that families need to receive services in all three areas to effect lasting changes. It is the intergenerational approach and the integrated family education focus that makes Even Start unique in addressing the needs of disadvantaged families.

PURPOSE & USES OF THE GUIDE

Purpose This Guide captures what has been learned over the past several years about the characteristics of effective Even Start Family Literacy programs. The guide is intended to serve multiple purposes related to improving program quality: ❶ to offer a guide for self-review by programs for the purpose of staff development and program improvement; ❷ to provide a focus for designing local evaluations to identify program strengths and weaknesses; ❸ to help state personnel and peer assistance teams review and improve programs by identifying characteristics that signal quality in programs as well as noting indications of possible problems; ❹ to serve as an outline of important program characteristics for those new to Even Start; and ❺ to give potential collaborators information about Even Start goals.

The ultimate purpose of the guide is to improve outcomes for Even Start families.

The statements of quality included herein are intended as goals. Even well-operated and effective programs may not be implementing all the suggestions included in the document. The Department of Education perceives design of local programs to be a matter of local discretion. The quality considerations in this document are examples of approaches that have led to successful outcomes; they are not program requirements. This document does not replace other federal guidance; programs must meet all of the requirements of the Even Start law, Part B of Chapter 1 of Title I of The Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, as amended.

Development The Guide was developed in response to requests from Even Start state coordinators for a document that they could use for engaging projects in a discussion of quality programs during project site visits. The process of development included input and review from Even Start and other family literacy practitioners and review by Even Start state coordinators and federal staff.

The guide incorporates information from a variety of sources. ❶ evaluation results from the initial four years of Even Start programs; ❷ research that has been conducted in the fields related to Even Start, specifically early childhood education, adult education, collaboration, parent education, and home visiting; ❸ the wisdom of practice that has accumulated from family literacy programs and been shared through conferences and visitations; ❹ the theoretical base that has emerged for family literacy led by the work of the National Center for Family Literacy; ❺ the work of other fields in developing indicators of quality, specifically adult education; and ❻ some of the legal requirements in the Even Start Family Literacy program legislation that shaped the Even Start program.

Special Populations Note Even Start family literacy programs designed to serve special populations, e.g., Migrant, Indian, or English as Second Language, or operate in specialized contexts, e.g., isolated rural areas or homeless shelters, will need to adapt the considerations identified herein to program circumstances. Some of the quality considerations may not apply or they may apply very differently to these programs.

Customizing the Guide

We anticipate that Even Start state coordinators may want to use the Guide as a basis for developing their own state documents, incorporating state standards and expectations. For example, states may wish to identify specific measures of performance associated with some indicator statements.

Organization of the Guide

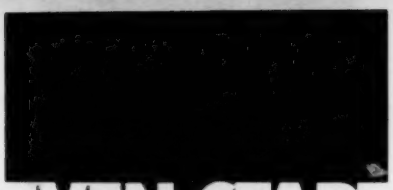
The indicators of quality are presented within ten major topic areas with many interconnections across the topics as appropriate for an integrated program. Each topic area begins with a statement of the primary goal or challenge associated with that topic or component. In some cases, clarifying information about federal Even Start requirements has been added.

Next, statements of conditions associated with quality programs are listed. For each topic area, a list of possible problem indications is also included to facilitate program review and state technical assistance. These are intended as "red flags" of possible problems to discuss further.

At the end of a topic, there is a "snapshot" description from a family literacy project to illustrate how the quality considerations are implemented in practice. The brief descriptions are intended to be starting places to inspire ideas for projects that might be using the Guide for self-review.

References for major resource documents are included at the end of the Guide and primary sources identified for each topic area.

Finally, the quality considerations are provided in a workbook format to facilitate self-review by programs.



Core Values: The Big Picture

This Guide begins with a brief discussion of six essential values or themes that distinguish high quality family literacy/Even Start programs. The rest of this Guide describes in detail how these themes could be operationalized as quality indicators within program components. By their nature, indicators are discrete and specific so that they can be observed and assessed. Thus, the presentation of indicators runs the risk of making the big picture of quality difficult to see. The values below describe the big picture in Even Start — themes that are foundational to the indicators, components, and activities of high quality family literacy programs.

Family-Centered Programming Families are the primary stakeholders in Even Start programs, responsible for identifying their own priorities and making decisions. Because the family is the unit of learning, Even Start values the home as the most important classroom. Successful programs build on family strengths, using the interests and goals of families as guides for programming. Even Start is a safe place for families to grow and develop.

Partnership of Families and Service Providers Staff respect for the diverse languages, cultures, and experiences of families is apparent in all aspects of program practice. Staff members view themselves as partners with other service providers in advocating for families within the larger community. Even Start staff work with families and other service providers to create and use social and resource support networks in the community.

Intensity and Duration of Services Quality Even Start programs have high goals and expectations for families, requiring for many families intense services over time. The design of the program recognizes the importance of intensity and emphasizes of quality of services.

Flexibility and Adaptability Successful Even Start programs fit services to families, not families to the program. Programs must remain flexible enough to both recognize and accommodate the diverse interests of different families and the changing needs of individual families over time. Program services are tailored for individual families.

Continuity of Messages and Services Quality programs are characterized by philosophical approaches and curricula that are compatible across cooperating programs, across Even Start components, and over time. The goal of Even Start programs is seamless service for families through the many transitions they naturally make. Institutionalization of family-centered approaches within the community to ensure continuity of services is a priority of Even Start leadership.

New Roles and Relationships for Staff Even Start programs require staff to operate in new ways, and thus provide specialized cross-disciplinary and cross-agency training opportunities to support new roles and responsibilities. Staff from Even Start and collaborating agencies work together with families as the focal point; that change requires different types of relationships among service providers. Even Start places high priority on developing relationships with collaborating agencies to ensure comprehensive services for families.

SECTION III

QUALITY INDICATORS

Integration of Components

Collaboration

Recruitment

Parent-Child Interactions & Parenting Education

Home Visiting

Adult Education/Adult Literacy

Early Childhood Program Settings

Retention of Families

Transitions

Staff Development

INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS

Challenge *To connect program activities through meaningful and consistent messages, providing an intense experience to change intergenerational patterns associated with low literacy.*

Even Start Note Even Start program models vary widely. A few are totally home-based; most combine center-based and home-based services. Some programs operate with a mix of different service providers and locations; in other cases, a single provider offers all component services in a single location.

Co-location of services may facilitate integration but is not the only service delivery model for Even Start.

Quality Considerations

1. All program components employ a **holistic approach to serving families;** that is, activities and plans are based on goals and interests identified by families rather than relying on preset materials.

2. Program has identified **common messages** to be emphasized across components, e.g., the value of literacy, high expectations for families, the importance of the application and transfer of skills, the role of experience in development, the importance of practice, the use of individual strengths, the central role of the parent in a child's development. Staff are able to articulate these common messages to each other, to families, and to the community so that others understand the messages.

3. Program sees the concept of integration as a way of planning opportunities to surround families with **messages that are continuously reinforced.** Program recognizes the need for integration of components and experiences as a way to intensify the program experience.

4. Program implements **specific connections across components,** for example:
   a. home visit and parenting activities have literacy connections
   b. parenting time addresses issues that arise during home visits or parent-child interactions
   c. the home visit provides an opportunity to practice applications of what has been discussed during parenting time
   d. literacy skills for adults are taught in the context of early childhood development, parenting, use of community resources, employment
   e. parent-child and home visit activities are designed with ease of transfer to the home in mind
   f. home visits are connected to center-based instruction

5. Program uses a **variety of approaches to establish linkages** across components, including connections based on meaningful themes, learner strategies (e.g., asking questions), particular activities, and values or attitudes.

MORE

6 Program staff understand the importance of integration at both the program level and the family level. The program's management structure is designed to facilitate integration of components. **Program leadership** takes an active role in fostering integration of components. Component integration is a staff development and supervision issue.

7 Program ensures that team members meet together regularly/daily to plan together. **Planning time** is paid time within the work day. There is an opportunity for all staff to be part of planning home visits.

8 **Staff development** includes specific training in family literacy. Staff development includes cross-training in the several disciplines involved and addresses team building.

9 Whole language strategies are used with adults and children. Staff use an **interdisciplinary approach** to curriculum.

10 **Parents** are involved in designing children's activities. Parents are welcome in children's classrooms. They are frequently invited to participate, and special provisions are made if it is difficult for parents to attend.

Indications of Problems with Integration

- ▶ Program schedule does not include regular and frequent planning time for teams.
- ▶ Staff do not view integration with other components as their job. Individual staff prefer to follow their own curricular ideas.
- ▶ One or more components relies solely on prepackaged materials.
- ▶ Collaborators who provide direct service (e.g., adult education) are not trained in family literacy.
- ▶ There have been no cross-training opportunities.
- ▶ Intervisitations of classrooms by program staff are rare.
- ▶ Parents cannot describe connections across their experiences with different program components.

Primary Sources: See National Center for Family Literacy in Reference Section. (Note that Integration of Components is a Theory Recommended by Family Literacy Experts. There is Not Yet a Developed Research Base for the Concept of Integration.)

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An Even Start Snapshot: Integration

(based on an example developed by Bonnie Freeman, National Center for Family Literacy)

Wanda lives in a trailer at the end of a three-mile dirt road with her four children. She dropped out of school when she was fifteen to have her first child. Her two school-age children are enrolled in Title I programs and one child has some hearing loss in the right ear. He is awaiting a hearing aid. The youngest children are two and four years. Wanda has a difficult time helping her children with their homework and often accuses the teachers of asking her to do their work. The Even Start home visitor says there are not enough pots to catch the water dripping from the ceiling when it rains. Wanda does the best she can, living thirteen miles from town with no car. Twice a month her sister will come over to take the family to town to buy supplies. Wanda is bitter when she speaks of her two husbands. "They beat me and left me here to take care of the children. I only hope the children can have a better life." The family's main connection to the world is the television and Wanda's love of stories. She enjoys making up "pretend" tales to entertain the children. She agreed to be part of a home-based Even Start program because she gets lonely and wants the children to "learn something."

Mona, Wanda's Even Start home visitor, does not know where to start! Mona decides to discuss Wanda and her family at the **next staff** meeting to help **plan her approach** with Mona. During the staff discussion, it became very clear to Mona that Wanda's **interests and needs are all interrelated.** Wanda's desire to improve herself could be the catalyst to addressing so many other concerns she has for her family. Staff recommended that Mona build the initial adult literacy lessons on **Wanda's interest** in reading to her children. She could write down her "pretend" tales and practice reading to her children. The parent-child interaction time might then include writing down the children's stories for school. Staff suggested that

Mona talk to Wanda about her parent-teacher conference at school this fall so that Wanda may better understand what her children are learning. Mona should **emphasize with Wanda in every way possible the value of reading and writing for herself and her children.** Mona might ask Wanda what else she would want to do with her children, perhaps suggesting a trip to the library if it does not initially come up. Mona hopes to transition Wanda into the center to involve her in discussions with peers about domestic violence and subsidized housing. Mona might want to come to the center's classes after meeting other parents.

Mona began developing with Wanda her **family action plan** during the next home visit. Wanda identified **three goals** she wanted for herself and her children. As next steps, Mona and Wanda identified a long list of **resources** she would need to accomplish her goals: funds to buy a car, a driver's license, a job, job training, more books, a library card, better reading skills, and the self-confidence that she can do it! So Wanda began to identify the first things she needed to do: learn to read better, explore job opportunities, ask her sister about watching the kids, etc. Mona skillfully **incorporated literacy and parenting activities and opportunities Wanda needed** into the weekly Even Start home visits. Mona started having her practice writing on Mona's portable computer, and printing pages so the children could illustrate them. Wanda was amazed how easy it was! Mona also suggested that Wanda call her church or volunteer groups to ask about free transportation to the library and to the school. Wanda decided to start her community outreach by calling the welfare office to see if there were funds to evaluate her son's hearing loss. As she began to see her accomplishments, Wanda became very excited about her future. She agreed to bring the children to the "Family Fun Day." Each child selected a favorite "homemade" book to bring. They loved the attention and praise they received from everyone.

COLLABORATION

Challenge

To develop a strong partnership of service providers who jointly take responsibility for providing family literacy services, and develop new relationships and systems to improve services for families.

Even Start Note

Even Start programs apply for funding in partnerships of at least two organizational entities: one or more local education agencies (LEAs) and one or more nonprofit community-based organizations, public agencies other than an LEA, institutions of higher education, or public or private nonprofit organizations of demonstrated quality other than an LEA. The partners assume responsibility for the compliance of the program with legal requirements and proper use of federal funds, although they might not have equal management responsibilities. One or more partners serves as the fiscal agent. Additional collaborative relationships help the partnership to extend the nature of support services to families. It is important to distinguish between the many collaborations of those types needed to implement a program and the more formal arrangements among partners that constitute the "eligible entity" that applies for an Even Start grant.

Quality Considerations

1. Program staff have a comprehensive view of the needs of families and recognize the need for a partnership in order to fully serve families. Staff see the focus of the partnership as **benefits to families;** secondary benefits are to partner agencies. Mutual objectives in terms of goals for families and the partner and other collaborating agencies have been articulated.

2. The program has developed **multiple relationships** with other agencies. The number of collaborators increases over the life of the program. Collaborations lead to new relationships for the program. Program staff recognize the value of a variety of joint arrangements, including referral and communication, cooperation, and collaboration.

3. Program collaborators represent a **variety of agencies,** serving different types of family needs. Alliances have been developed in the areas of health, social services, counseling, education, and job training or placement. Collaborators include housing authorities, homeless shelters, WIC programs, libraries, JTPA, adult education programs, Head Start, vocational programs, voluntary literacy organizations, Title I and other programs funded through the Improving America's School Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Even Start program has expanded upon the services available from collaborators based on the needs of the families served. Program has relationships with multiple providers of early childhood and adult education services. Even Start is not duplicating existing services.

MORE

4 **Referrals** for the program have come from collaborators. Even Start families have been referred to collaborators for services. Even Start staff stay in touch with collaborators about families they have referred.

5 Program and collaborators **share information about families** when possible to improve and tailor service options. Confidentiality issues have been addressed; programs know what information can and cannot be shared. Collaborating partners make decisions on the basis of family needs and goals. Program and collaborators have attempted to standardize procedures to minimize barriers to services, including developing common terminology and definitions of clients.

6 Program offers **training as an incentive** for collaborators. Collaborating staff train together to build "buy in" to Even Start approaches and philosophy.

7 Program has made formal and informal **agreements with partners and other collaborators,** beginning in the early stages of preparing applications. Agreements might include: description of services each offers, designation of roles and contacts, fiscal arrangements and sources of funding, length of agreement and option for renewal, communication mechanisms and expectations, procedures for problem-solving.

8 Program recognizes that key staff time is required to attend to building and maintaining collaborative relationships. **Communication** is regular and frequent and program staff visit each others' program sites. Program leadership communicates with leadership of other agencies on a continual basis.

9 Some staff have **"boundary-crossing" roles** with collaborators; that is, they make connections based on their cross-disciplinary experiences with staff of other agencies.

10 Ownership in the **relationship with collaborators** is built at all levels. Staff are well-informed about the roles and missions of the collaborators. Staff also know each others' constraints. Staff express attitude of respect for collaborators and their contributions and a willingness to work together to solve problems that arise.

11 Program has provided **information** to help other agencies understand Even Start goals and clarified any misunderstandings. All staff members can articulate the key messages of Even Start.

12 Collaborators have a role in identifying outcomes for local evaluation and an interest in **evaluation results.** Collaborating agencies cooperate with data collection as needed. Even Start local evaluation addresses successes and improvements in collaborations.

13 **Families have a role** in identifying possible collaborators. Families select resources that are most appropriate for them.

Indications of Problems with Collaborations

- Program fears loss of identity or threats of competition for resources from collaborators.
- There are no changes in service delivery to families attributable to the efforts of collaborators.
- There is loss of collaborators over time or turnover among collaborators. Collaborators complain there are few benefits for their agencies or improvements in their services.
- Collaborators do not understand Even Start goals and requirements (e.g., component integration).
- Collaborators, including Even Start, cite lack of common procedures, definitions, and regulations and bureaucracies as primary barriers to working together.
- There is no evidence of resource sharing with collaborators. There are no apparent incentives for collaborations.
- Partners are not clear about what each program offers. Common goals have not been discussed. Staff have limited knowledge of collaborators or perception that collaborators have little to offer.
- No co-training has occurred.
- There are obvious omissions of relationships with programs serving similar populations.
- Even Start duplicates existing services in community.
- All collaborations are limited to referral and access only (e.g., simple coordination of information).

Primary Sources: See Bruner, Melaville and Blank, Education and Human Services Consortium in Reference Section.

An Even Start Snapshot: Collaboration

(based on an example from Webster Groves, Missouri, Even Start program and others)

The school district, covering a large rural area, and a non-profit family service agency successfully wrote an Even Start proposal and are implementing the plan together. The program is scheduled to open in a few months. **Additional community agencies representing a wide range of services** (i.e., WIC, JTPA, housing, Head Start, adult literacy) participated on the writing team and wrote contracts with the new Even Start entity which clearly state the services and resources to be provided to support the Even Start proposal. Angela, the new director, understands that you cannot expect collaborating agencies to have the same agenda as your own. She knows **it takes time to build trust.** Time spent developing a **shared vision** is worth it.

She recognizes that it's important to keep the original collaborators as part of the team. Some are already involved on **the advisory council.** She will have an opening celebration, inviting the families of staff and the advisory committee so everyone might see ways to support the program. She already has promises for furniture from two members of her advisory council. It is important that all members of the advisory council are able to articulate the purpose and services offered by Even Start because, at any time, anyone of them might be asked, "What is that new program down the street?" Angela plans a retreat for the advisory council after the program has been in operation a year. She will be able to present the first year's successes, as well as use the group to set the second year's **goals and identify community resources** to support these goals.

One collaborating challenge Angela already sees is the relationship of Even Start with the Head Start program that already operates in the school district. Angela sees **no duplication of services** and little

reason for competition for families. Collaborators were chosen because they represent the community's characteristics, i.e., cultural values, beliefs, problems, needs, and services, and Angela feels that there is a large group of families for Even Start to target without getting into "turf wars." One strategy Angela is planning to suggest at the next monthly planning meeting with her service partners is to **share each others' waiting lists** and develop a **joint screening/intake tool** to facilitate referral of families to appropriate services. The group has already set up a system to **track all referrals** made to Even Start from other agencies and referrals made from Even Start to other agencies. The common screening/intake form would be a next step.

The collaborating partners have already started joint staff training. The first goal is to **share information** about each others' program services, client eligibility, and referral process. Staff from the collaborating partners have expressed an interest in workshops on other topics: child development, nutrition, women's health issues, legal services, and parenting. The collaborating partners will mutually determine the content of training and **share the costs,** based on the agencies' abilities to pay. Even Start staff offered to babysit during the school district meeting and asked if some of the Head Start staff could help them. Staff are planning joint **Even Start and Head Start family events** because they anticipate they may have families in common. Angela plans that Even Start will support other agencies' activities and community events in every way possible.

RECRUITMENT

Challenge *To recruit those families most in need, specifically low-income disadvantaged families with low literacy rates or limited English proficiency at program entry.*

Even Start Note Programs are expected to serve families with the greatest needs for Even Start services as indicated by literacy needs, or English language proficiency of the eligible parents. In competitions, priority is given to projects planning to operate in areas with the highest concentrations of poverty. Other need-related indicators also may be considered such as handicapping or disabling conditions, homelessness, and chronic unemployment. Families eligible must have at least one eligible parent and one eligible child. Teen parents under the age of 16 are eligible to participate if they are within the state's compulsory attendance range, they are among those most in need, and the LEA provides or ensures the required basic education component. Programs are expected to serve families with children representing at least a three-year age range (which may begin at birth).

Quality Considerations

1. Program uses **multiple methods and sources** for recruitment, including methods that employ personal contact.

2. Strategies for recruitment include distribution of informational materials about the program in **high visibility** locations such as laundromats and stores. Materials are prepared in the **languages** of the population that the program serves. Strategies include methods that do **not depend on print** such as personal contact and informal meetings.

3. Recruitment strategies and messages reflect the **cultural diversity** of the community and the intended target families. Recruitment processes take cultural norms into account (e.g., which family member is contacted, expectations of all family members).

4. Current and past **program participants** have an important and planned role in recruiting parents.

5. Recruitment is **proactive,** especially in areas of high poverty; that is, likely participants are sought out and encouraged to enter. Several different types of contacts are made to encourage participation, as necessary. Programs recognize the preparation time it may take to recruit some families.

6. Recruitment is considered part of **everyone's job.**

7 Recruitment is **ongoing.** Program recognizes that different levels of intensity for recruitment are required at different stages in program development. Program pays attention to shifts in community population and reviews recruitment strategies regularly.

8 Program provides **clear messages about expectations** associated with participation so parents have full knowledge to help them make the commitment to enroll. Family commitment to participation in the program is important, and program helps those most in need overcome barriers to full participation. Anticipated barriers to the family's full participation in the program, e.g., transportation and child care, are addressed during the recruitment process. Solutions to barriers are sought before the family begins participation.

9 Recruitment messages emphasize what the program can do for the whole family, assuming an **outcomes/goals orientation** as the selling point.

10 The recruitment **process is made as easy and friendly** as possible for families, e.g., pre-enrollment information is gathered in the home.

11 Program has established reciprocal **relationships with community collaborators** for recruitment. Even Start staff are active within various community agencies in service and volunteer roles.

12 When selecting participants, a variety of family needs are considered in determining "most in need," including the information from referring agencies, family stresses, and health of family members. Program **selection criteria** (e.g., level of adult literacy, family income, employment status) are written and available to all staff, parents, and collaborators. The program has made its methods explicit, e.g.,weighing criteria for ranking participants according to need.

Indications of Problems with Recruitment

- ▶ Entry scores of adults on literacy measures are high on the average for the area, e.g., high school level and beyond.
- ▶ Education and income statistics of families are high for the geographic area.
- ▶ Selection criteria have been added to the federal and state requirements that may limit eligibility of high needs families.
- ▶ Staff describe parents as "coming to us," and see no need to recruit.

- Program spends no resources on recruitment.
- Program avoids active recruitment in high-poverty areas.
- Recruitment processes are formal and application-heavy with little personal contact incorporated.
- Program does not use collaborators in an active way for recruitment.
- Recruitment is a one-time event, rather than an ongoing process.
- Parents are not participating in all components of the program. There is high turnover of families in the program.
- Families who drop out of the program were often not aware of expectations and requirements upon entry.
- Profile of families in the program shows that most in need (e.g., low literacy adults, learning disabled adults, limited English proficient adults) have not been recruited.
- Parents do not bring friends and extended families to program's family activities.
- Recruitment messages suggest that low literacy and inadequate parenting skills are characteristics of a particular population group, i.e., one ethnic or racial group.

PRIMARY SOURCES: SEE RMC RESEARCH'S RESOURCES FOR RECRUITERS AND EVEN START NEWSLETTERS DESCRIBING STAFF MENTORING SITE EXPERIENCES IN REFERENCE SECTION.

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An Even Start Snapshot: Recruitment

(based on an example from Webster Groves, Missouri, Even Start program and Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions)

Staff in this urban Even Start project develop an annual recruitment plan always using **multiple methods and resources,** including as a minimum: a **highly visible** media campaign (PSA's, calendar of events and ads in newspapers, flyers, brochures, posters, etc.); an open house twice a year; special events monthly; participation in community events as often as possible; and a means and schedule to distribute material through the community agencies and neighborhoods. Program information is in the language and at the literacy level of the families. Neighborhood canvassing is done as often as possible, but at least three times a year. Staff members team together and select neighborhoods with which they are familiar to canvass. Current **Even Start participants** are encouraged to join the recruiting teams. Canvassing is frequently done door-to-door, particularly targeting homes with young children's toys in the yards and hallways. Staff also visit the local laundromats and convenience stores to talk about Even Start and leave brochures.

A personal letter is written to a potential family and is **followed up** with a personal visit whenever possible. Staff and parents complete a "screening questionnaire" at home which is intended to describe the family as well as provide clues about their literacy skills. For instance, staff may ask the age and educational level of all persons living in the home, what the family enjoys doing together, what activities the children do at home, if there are special concerns about any family member, and what about Even Start sounds the most important for the family. The staff **select the families most in need of Even Start services** based on this screening tool. Staff also set recruitment goals identifying those families most in need based on the community's profile. Staff need to keep in mind the program's limited resources and determine how they will most effec-

tively serve the families most in need. Often staff will refer families to other services in the community if Even Start has a waiting list. Staff **review the waiting list** each month and stay in contact with wait-listed families by mail. Staff **talk about the expectations** with each family before enrollment in Even Start. In many cases, staff must provide **ongoing assistance up to the day the family enrolls.** Seemingly insignificant factors such as serving breakfast and offering free books upon enrollment are important to many families.

Each staff member must be able to articulate the purpose of Even Start and activities for families, because **recruitment can happen at any time.** To prepare, staff model talking about Even Start to potential families and referring agencies during staff meetings. Each staff member sets recruitment goals, such as number of monthly contacts with families and agencies. Recruitment becomes a weekly agenda item at each staff meeting. The Even Start director has hired Spanish-speaking staff to be able to communicate with families as they enroll in Even Start. As modeled by the director, all staff have a strong desire to work with the program's families and **know the community resources.** Each staff member is asked to serve on community agencies' committees and boards to become familiar with community services and be visible as Even Start staff. Many Even Start family events are planned with and include families in other community service organizations, such as Head Start and the local YWCA. Resources and facilities are always shared so that families learn about the other services. **Ongoing** and continuous community outreach builds trust and **relationships with collaborating staff.**

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING EDUCATION

Challenge *To have a positive impact on the whole family by enhancing the relationships between parents and children and the literacy value of interactions.*

EVEN START NOTE This component and the next (home visiting for educational purposes) include a wide array of program activities in support of families' literacy development of parents and children, children's transition to school, interactions of parents with schools and the wider community, development of understanding of child development, improvement in family relations, and life skills development. Home visits are addressed separately because of the special role they play in Even Start.

Quality Considerations

1. Program provides **regularly scheduled opportunities** for parent-child interaction as well as other types of parent education and support.

2. The parenting component includes a **variety of ways that parents can participate,** including individual and group involvement. Planning allows for a range of types and levels of participation based on family goals.

3. **All staff** receive training in parenting as part of their jobs.

4. Staff spend time **developing relationships** with parents but are aware of appropriate boundaries. Staff members have an empathetic view of parents and the challenges they face.

5. In programs that intend to produce substantial improvements in outcomes for children, parents participate about **twenty hours a month** in parenting-related activities, including home visiting, parent discussion groups, and parent-child literacy activities.

6. Parenting program includes attention to **family development** and family relationships. Parenting program includes attention to supporting parental **self-esteem.** Parenting program is used as an opportunity for identifying **resources** to support families.

7. Parenting program builds on the **interests and questions of parents,** and does not rely solely on scripted materials. Parents are actively involved in the design and planning of parenting activities perhaps through an advisory council. Ongoing assessments by parents are used to ensure responsiveness of activities to parents' interests and needs.

MORE

8 Program planning attends to the need for parents to relate to their peers and allows time for **social interaction.**

9 Parenting program includes attention to **beliefs and attitudes about child-raising** in addition to dealing with positive behavior management. Program provides guided opportunities for parents to problem-solve within the context of routine family events.

10 Parent-child activities are intended to help the parent **learn more about his/her own child** and see the child as an active contributor to development and learning. Activities help parents form reasonable expectations of their child's achievement and devise challenging experiences. Teacher-parent debriefing follows at least some parent-child experiences. There are opportunities to reflect on how what has been learned about child development applies to the activity.

11 Program recognizes importance of addressing the most pressing concerns of families. Program has identified **collaborators** who can support parenting activities; collaborators might include libraries, counseling programs, JOBS, JTPA, Reading Is Fundamental, cooperative extension. Parenting program addresses a wide **variety of topics** of interest and importance to families, including nutrition, wellness, household management, community resources, and dealing with stress, substance abuse, and family violence.

12 Parent development and child development issues and questions are addressed frequently and directly. Program affords opportunities for **one-to-one** interchanges for dealing with parenting issues.

13 Parent-child activities encourage active manipulation of a variety of objects, engagement of children in problem-solving and thinking, and **active involvement** in reading stories. Activities are fun and encourage involvement of both child and parent. Children exercise choice and decision-making. Parents communicate with and listen to their child rather than instruct.

14 **Reading every day** is encouraged. Program helps parents to learn about sources of books for children and themselves, including becoming borrowers at public libraries.

15 Activities are designed for easy **transfer of learning** to other situations. Expectations for and ideas about transfer and practice are made explicit. Teachers follow up transfer expectations.

16 Parenting activities have **literacy connections;** parent-child activities have enhanced literacy value. Parent education strengthens literacy experiences that occur within routine family interactions. Parenting is integrated into the teaching of basic academic skills.

17 Program devises opportunities for the **whole family** to participate in parenting activities.

18 The materials used in parenting and parent-child activities are **culturally and linguistically relevant.** Parent-child activities are carried out in the dominant language of families.

19 Program designs activities to strengthen **partnerships between parents and school** programs and personnel. Parents participate in variety of school and classroom activities, including volunteering, governance, and home learning activities.

Indications of Problems with Parent-Child Interactions Parenting Education

- Staff do not see that parents have strengths from which to build.
- Parents are not involved in planning activities.
- Staff do not know individual families' needs and interests.
- Most of parent education time is spent in "expert" presentation.
- Parent-child activities are always designed for whole group participation rather than individual exploration by parents with their children.
- Staff do not model positive parent-child interactions.
- There is little interaction among group participants, groups are quiet, or there is little emotional involvement of parents in discussions or activities.
- Parenting activities only include one family member, there are no special activities to involve families.
- Programs depend totally on pre-set materials.
- Parenting activities are held sporadically, not regularly scheduled.
- There has been no training for staff in parenting.
- Parents object to taking time away from their own literacy work to participate with their children.

Primary Sources: See Powell, National Center for Family Literacy, Even Start Evaluations, Parents as Teachers in Reference Section.

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An Even Start Snapshot: Parenting and Parent-Child Interaction

(based on Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions)

Supporting Even Start adults in their parenting role is part of most activities at this midwestern, urban Even Start project. **All Even Start staff** received training in parenting education when the directors of all the collaborators pooled resources and sponsored a six-session staff development course on parenting. Joyce, the bilingual parent educator, is responsible for organizing and conducting the parenting workshops for Even Start parents. Workshop topics are often **requested by parents** and repeated during the month so that parents can choose the one that best fits their schedule. Some parents choose to attend a workshop more than once. Topics have included early childhood development, drugs and alcohol, "Disciplining with Love," nutrition, and community resources. Workshops are **conducted in Spanish and English** so that those speaking primarily Spanish will want to attend and have an opportunity to learn more English. A lively conversation always takes place during each workshop. Parents often take a leadership role in running the workshop. One parent educator commented that **parents learn more from each other** than from staff!

Parents have regular scheduled time in their child's classroom every day except Fridays. Because parents say that they often become bored with the activities their children select, staff decided during parent-child time to have parents select the activity one day each week, the children select on two days, and the staff select on the last day each week. Staff encourage parents to try each activity and **point out to parents during the activity how much the child is enjoying and learning.** Staff encourage parents to make books with their children as a joint activity. Stickers are a popular material. As the **parent reads the story to the child,** the child selects the sticker that matches the text. Parents are asked to **volunteer** as a classroom aide twice a month. Each early childhood classroom has several parents helping each week. The parents learn to supervise small group activities and model the teacher.

Staff use every opportunity to **model positive discipline strategies,** e.g. not yelling, threatening, etc. Staff show parents how talk to their child, set limits, and problem-solve when they feel angry or frustrated with their children. For parents receiving parenting education in the home, the home visitor promotes **positive family interactions.** The home visitor talks about spending time with their children and discusses turning off the TV during this family time. She talks about the value of seeing family or friends on the weekends, attending children's events in the community, and visiting the public library and playgrounds. She asks the parent what she would like to focus on when discussing parenting. The home visitor is careful to suggest activities **appropriate for the age and development** of the children and uses materials found in the home to reinforce parenting skills.

HOME VISITING

Challenge

To individualize the program for parents and children, building on the strengths that are apparent in familiar settings and to demonstrate that the home is the child's first and most important learning environment. Home visits increase the intensity of the program experience as well as increasing access to services for some families.

Even Start Note

In Even Start, home visits are intended primarily to advance the instructional goals of the program. Social service support goals are provided primarily through collaborators. Even Start funds can be used when necessary for social service support activities.

Quality Considerations

1. **All families** receive home visits with an **instructional focus** and educational objectives. The **number of visits** and the length of visits vary by program model and family need. Unless the home is the primary site for services, project ideally conducts at least one home visit a month for each family, acknowledging that it may take some time in group participation for some families to be comfortable with home visits.

2. The home visit is used as an opportunity for the parent and child to learn and play together. **Literacy is a primary focus** of activities. The home visit supports retention of families in all components.

3. Materials and approaches for the home visit are **tailored** for each family. The resources and materials found in the home are the basis of activities. Home visitors build upon and adapt to the family environment, seeking transfer of home visit activities to daily interactions between parent and child.

4. Home visits are prearranged, planned, and regularly **scheduled.** Scheduling of home visits depends on individual and family schedules. Home visitor staff and families understand the importance of the home visit and make the environment conducive to learning.

5. **Parents have an active role** in shaping the visit and in the debriefing of the visit. The home visitor plans with the parent activities or roles for the other adults and children who are likely to be present during the home visit.

6. Program highly values home visitor **rapport with families** and families' comfort with home visitor. Rapport with families in the program is key for staff selection and supervision. Home visits are conducted by a familiar service provider for continuity.

MORE

7 **Staff development** for home visitors includes team debriefing of experiences they have had in the home; for example, for twelve hours of direct service, approximately one hour of supervision, coaching, mentoring, is provided, including structured discussions among staff.

8 Home visiting staff view visits as an information **bridge to other resources.** Home visitors have backup support to link families to resources. Home visiting staff receive training in dealing with issues that may arise in the home setting, e.g., abuse, violence, substance abuse, safety in the home, and emergency procedures. Formal relationships with agencies help to address families with multiple needs.

9 Program recognizes that some families may require a **transition period** before they are comfortable with and committed to home visits. Temporary alternate locations such as libraries are identified in cases where the family initially is uncomfortable with the visit occurring in the home.

10 The home visit is **linked to other program components.**

11 Home visitors demonstrate **sensitivity to family culture.** Ideally, home visitors speak the first language of the family or involve collaborators who share the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of families.

12 Home visits **balance** parent-child relationship building, child development, and attention to parents' needs and interests.

13 Home visitors help parents to **observe children** and point out developmental interpretations of children's actions. Home visitors model interactions and reinforcements.

14 Home visitor staff are able to set **boundaries** for their roles in working with families.

15 Program **coordinates** home visit activities **with other service providers** who also make home visits to the same families.

Indications of Problems with Home Visiting

- Home visits are infrequent, occur only once or twice a year. Parents are often not at home for scheduled visit.
- There is no attempt to create a learning environment for the home visit, e.g., no attempt to deal with distractions, TV set left on, etc.
- The parent is a passive bystander during the visit.
- Visits only address child's development or adult literacy.
- Activities are independent of activities in other components of program. Home visits are considered an "add on" rather than an integral part of the program.
- Home visitors are unsure of how to deal with problems that arise during visit.
- Home visitors do not feel comfortable in home setting.
- Home visitors or parents identify cultural or linguistic barriers.
- Home visits are focused on social service needs rather than being instructional in nature.

Primary Sources: See Powell, Parents as Teachers, Center for Future of Children in Reference Section.

An Even Start Snapshot: Home Visiting

(based on Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions)

Mary, a home visitor, takes her turn developing the lessons to be used in **all the Even Start components** based on this month's theme: nutrition. Staff ask parents for suggestions for monthly topics. At the regularly scheduled monthly meeting for the entire staff, Mary models the lessons plans which include, for example, steps to do a weekly meal plan for a family based on a budget and good eating habits, how to read and adapt a recipe, and ideas to involve the whole family in meal preparation. The exact materials she uses during a home visit are **tailored** to the experience and background of each family. She wants to discuss topics which would build a **trusting relationship** with each family. Mary knows that home visitors have to learn to be **sensitive to the family's culture.** For example, one of her families is a large, extended family and she has to be prepared to include the grandmother who speaks little English and the older children if they are at home. She always has extra materials so her lesson plan can be **flexible.** She makes a schedule with her families but she is flexible about the **length of time for each visit** and the level of parent involvement. It varies from time to time, and parent to parent. If a family is not home, she leaves a note and calls the next day to **reschedule the missed visit.** When one of her families is in crisis, Mary knows that she needs to deal with those stresses first, possibly making a plan to assist the parent to contact **other community resources,** before moving onto **literacy activities** as the focus of the visit.

Mary visits the classrooms in which her families' children are students, typically on the day of the **scheduled** home visit so that she sees what the children are doing and has something positive to report to the parents. During the home visit, Mary has little trouble engaging the children with her planned activities; the family knows to turn off the TV and to not talk to friends at this time. Mary may have another **staff person team** with her if there are a number of children in the family so she can focus her attention with the targeted

child and parent. Mary may ask the parent to do an activity with the targeted child and help the parent **observe her child.** For instance, she asked Adam during one home visit to tell his mother the best thing that happened at school this week. Adam described with great excitement the trip to the petting zoo. Adam's mother, Terry, wrote down his story and Adam cut out the animals from Mary's magazines to illustrate the storybook. Mary pointed out to Terry how well Adam described the field trip. His speech had improved a lot this year at Even Start. During a home visit, Mary often has an opportunity to interact with the whole family and reports back to other Even Start staff what the family likes to do and ideas to further involve the family in Even Start. As part of ongoing **staff development,** Mary will bring other Even Start staff with her on a home visit so that everyone working with a family understands the family's home environment. Parents report that knowing the home visiter makes them more comfortable when they come to the center. Mary usually has a monthly "group home visit" or, as she calls it, a "parent meeting" in a community room at the housing project. Mary and the parents exchange information and the parents **take an active role** in planning field trips. These group home visits are successful because they take place close to the families' homes and create a social atmosphere.

ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

Challenge

To improve the self-sufficiency of families by enabling them to meet their goals, increasing the English language literacy levels of family members, enhancing skills and experiences related to employability, and improving parents' abilities to be advocates for and teachers of their children

Even Start Note

Eligibility under the Adult Education Act, which is necessary for Even Start eligibility of all parents except certain teen parents, includes those adults whose lack of mastery of basic skills constitutes a substantial impairment to obtaining or retaining employment commensurate with abilities, or impairs their abilities to function in society, and those who do not have a certificate of graduation from secondary school or its equivalent Collaborations often include agencies that provide postsecondary experiences so that efforts are not duplicated

Note: Adult Education program model indicators of quality (see OVAE in Reference section) are identified in parentheses at the end of the statements below to facilitate cross-referencing. See also sections on Recruitment and Retention for other Even Start indicators related to Adult Education model indicators.

Quality Considerations

1 Adult students have **short and long term goals** for their participation in adult education. The goals represent realistic expectations and take into consideration previous educational experiences. Those goals are expressed in a written plan and are measurable or observable. Adults' individual goals shape the program and are directly and explicitly connected to instruction. Goals are revisited periodically and progress toward goal attainment is assessed.

2 The program values a **wide variety of outcomes** (e.g., obtaining drivers' license, reading to children, obtaining high school diplomas) for adult learners.

3 Adults' progress in literacy depends on their literacy levels at program entry. Most adults make constant **progress on literacy indicators** until they exit the program. Among adults who do not obtain their high school diploma or equivalent, most continue in the program long enough to receive on average at least 70 hours of adult education prior to leaving the program. For those for whom the GED is an appropriate goal, most who enter the program at high school literacy levels obtain their high school diploma or equivalent within a year. Most who obtain their high school diploma or equivalent in the program continue to pursue other goals, including employment or continued education. (Adult Education model indicators 1 and 2)

4 Academic content is taught within a **functional context** (e.g., workplace, parenting, and/or life skills) appropriate to the lives of adult learners. Content is integrated with other components. Adult education includes life

skills, computation, and language. Language literacy includes more than reading, i.e., speaking, writing, listening, and computer skills.

5 A **mix of methods** is used for instruction, including a balance of group and individual activities. The instructional mix includes activities such as self-directed independent learning, computer-aided instruction, cooperative learning, and individual tutoring. Adult students write regularly. The program employs strategies in a flexible manner. (Adult Education model indicator 4)

6 Materials are appropriate for the **range of learner levels** represented in the program (as assessed at program entry), usually requiring a wide variety of materials. Materials are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the learners. Materials include authentic items, i.e., newspapers, forms, magazine articles, announcements, etc. Materials reflect the context of the adult student's life, including work place items. (Adult Education model indicator 4)

7 Instruction and learning activities explicitly build from learners' **prior knowledge.** Instruction emphasizes association of new learnings with daily life and encourages applications and transfer of learning to new situations. Connections are made to children's instructional programs and to the activities of home visits.

8 Program design offers maximum **flexibility** for the adult learner in terms of format, schedule, and location as well as entry options. Program actively encourages re-entry if absence from program has occurred.

9 **Staff are knowledgeable** about learning needs of adults. Staff are knowledgeable about learners' cultures and languages. Staff have good **rapport** with students and are interested in building relationships with students. Whenever possible, the Even Start program manager is involved in selection of adult education staff.

10 The learning **environment** is adult-centered, i.e., appropriate and comfortable for adults.

11 Instructors act as **resources and facilitators,** modeling problem-solving behaviors. They avoid "helping" in a way that would increase or reinforce dependency.

12 A combination of formal and informal **assessment** methods is used to identify progress and needs. Assessment is regular and frequent. Results are discussed with students and linked to learners' goals and to instructional plans. Ideally, assessments are carried out in the context of meaningful tasks. Adults understand assessment purposes, the results of assessments, and can explain their progress. Care is taken at intake so

that adults value the role of assessment; testing may not be part of initial intake if not appropriate for the adult learner. (Adult Education model indicator 4)

13 The program promotes advancement in learning beyond basic literacy. Job readiness and career exploration are a part of the curriculum. Program staff are knowledgeable about a range of options for participants to **continue their learning and/or obtain employment,** e.g., community college, vocational programs, ties to the business community. Programs work on transition plans with adult students to meet adults' goals, including long-term goals for self-sufficiency. (Adult Education model indicator 2)

14 Program staff work with learners to remove or **reduce common barriers,** e.g., lack of child care, transportation, by identifying appropriate support services. (Adult Education model indicator 6)

15 Program services are **continuous,** including summer months, although the format of services may change in different program cycles.

16 Staff turnover is low. Learners generally have the same instructor for the program year. If staff changes occur, program ensures **continuity** of approach to learning.

17 Staff participate in ongoing **staff development,** including training specifically related to family literacy. Staff are familiar with parenting and early childhood staff and exchange relevant information. Ideally, they meet at least weekly to plan an integrated curriculum. (Adult Education model indicator 5)

18 Program staff are able to address the needs of adults with learning disabilities.

Indications of Problems with Adult Education/ Adult Literacy

- Adult education occurs only periodically; adult education occurs only as a by-product of home visit.
- Adult education is regarded by learners and by other collaborating staff as simply a fixed course, primarily workbook-based.
- The program has a view that "one size fits all" when it comes to adult literacy. Most activities do not directly or clearly relate to individual adult learners' goals. Much time is spent in whole group instruction or with drill and practice activities.

- Materials are limited in number, limited to texts, limited to a narrow band of skills, and/or not representative of learners' cultures.
- Adult students have difficulty articulating the relevance of instruction to their daily lives or to their own goals.
- Adults cannot articulate plans for continuation beyond high school equivalency.
- Adult education staff do not value the goals of the Even Start program. Adult education staff do not participate in program staff development.
- Adults who drop out of the program cite participation barriers, e.g., schedule, amount of time, child care, etc. Staff believe students are not motivated.
- Only a few adults who enter at high literacy levels receive their high school diplomas or equivalents while in the program.

PRIMARY SOURCES: SEE EVEN START EVALUATIONS, OVAE MODEL INDICATORS OF PROGRAM QUALITY FOR ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS, PELAVIN, NATIONAL EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN REFERENCE SECTION.

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An Even Start Snapshot: Adult Literacy

(based on an example from Barbara Tierney, Manhattan, Kansas Even Start program, and Even Start National Evaluation)

An Even Start program in rural Pennsylvania offers the adult education component both at the Even Start Center located in the elementary school and through the home visiting program which offers an individualized adult learning curriculum. One of the students, Claudet, a mother of four, is finishing her second year with Even Start. She dropped out of school in the tenth grade following the birth of her first child. Her main goal when enrolling in Even Start was to be able to read "chapter books," not just picture books, to her children. She now has two children in grade school and she **wants to help them learn.** She feels this will encourage them to finish high school. She said she is embarrassed that she can not read all the words on the food labels to buy "good" food for her children. She also feels "ripped off" at fast food restaurants because she can not check the bill. Claudet's friend who brought her to Even Start initially has already gotten her GED and is **starting a job.** Claudet said she may want a job when her children are older. She knows she has a lot to learn before she can get a job. Right now her **short term goal** is to get a library card so she can get books to help her children with their school work.

Claudet was receiving adult education at home but has made the **choice** to come to the center with her two youngest children with **transportation provided** by a newly purchased Even Start van. Claudet admits that she was afraid to come to the center's adult education program but she decided to try it because she says, " All the staff who have visited me at home are so **friendly and encouraging."** She is finding that her two children love their classes at the center and that she is able to set up a class schedule four days a week that is **flexible,** based around her family schedule. She also likes the postcards and telephone calls provided as **reminders** of special events and about classes she has missed because of family illnesses.

Claudet thought she might have to take a test when she started classes at the center and that the classes would involve a lot of silent work in workbooks like she had in grade school. Instead, she found students reading materials and discussing topics such as budgeting, family health concerns, safety issues, and the use of television which **they had requested.** You can tell she is really pleased about **how much she is able to contribute** to the class discussion. Claudet likes hearing the teachers read to the class and often takes the tape recorder home so that she can listen to a lesson on tape. She finds she learns better by listening and is really pleased with her progress. Claudet has told the staff several times that she feels her adult education teacher **who has been with her the whole year** is very **knowledgeable** and able to teach the material so that she understands.

Claudet is surprised how much she likes computers. The program is linked up with another Even Start project in the state and Claudet has a pen pal through the modem hook-up. She is thrilled to take the center's laptop to do work at home with her children. She said she may want to think about getting a job working with computers **as a long term goal.** She received a **Certificate of Improvement** yesterday because she has made **significant progress** towards completing a level in her adult education course. Claudet continually says, "This is not like going to school. I feel good coming to my Even Start school." Claudet now is volunteering in her oldest child's third grade classroom. Claudet was particularly pleased to announce to the class that her husband has just enrolled in the adult education classes offered at night to get his GED because he saw how positive she was feeling about Even Start.

Early Childhood Program Settings

Challenge

To enhance development and ease transition to school by providing developmentally appropriate settings for children of all ages from the families enrolled in Even Start.

Even Start Note

Children ages birth through seven are eligible to participate in Even Start if a parent is eligible. A family is no longer eligible to participate in Even Start two years after the youngest child reaches the age of 8 or after all participating parents are no longer eligible for adult basic education services under the Adult Education Act, whichever occurs first.

Quality Considerations

1. Early childhood **staff members** are well qualified, trained in child development, and have appropriate certification by state requirements.

2. Early childhood centers have received appropriate **licensing** from state.

3. Children participate in **sufficient hours** of appropriate early childhood experience, including home visiting, Head Start, etc. ideally at least sixty hours monthly for children ages three through five.

4. The physical **environment** is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age-appropriate in terms of furniture, equipment, materials, and access to bathrooms and clean-up facilities.

5. The **adult-child ratio** allows for frequent **interaction** between children and adults. Adult-child ratios are consistent with state licensing standards. Children have sustained relationships with primary teachers/caregivers.

6. Early childhood program balances attention to all **areas of development** — social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.

7. Program has a **curricular base** for all age groups served by the program. Early childhood curriculum has a respected theoretical base; staff make use of curricular philosophy when planning activities for individual children.

8. Staff encourage direct, firsthand, interactive **experiences** for learning. Staff recognize that children develop knowledge and skills through active experiences and social interactions. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Classroom activities are integrated and interdisciplinary, building on children's interests and knowledge.

9 There are many opportunities for **child-initiated** learning. Children's play is respected by staff as legitimate learning time. Children are encouraged to plan. They participate in planning their day and are aware of basic schedules and routines.

10 The environment is **language-rich.** Children are read to daily. Books and other reading material are abundant. Songs, rhymes, and group stories are common activities. The staff demonstrate many ways to encourage children to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.

11 Staff encourage development of **reasoning and problem-solving** by providing challenging learning experiences, encouraging children's development through skillful questioning and suggestions for furthering activities.

12 Classroom environment reflects **homes and lives** of children in terms of culture and language. Children's work is displayed.

13 Staff use **positive behavior management** for discipline.

14 Staff have frequent opportunities and time to **plan** together and with staff of other Even Start components.

15 Teachers regularly **observe** all children and record observations for use in planning activities and assessing progress. Records of **progress and development** are maintained on each child and regularly shared with parents. Children are helped to understand their progress in learning.

16 Children are **relaxed and happy** in the early childhood environment.

17 Program gears expected participation to the needs and **development of the child.** For example, program recognizes the time it may take for infants and toddlers to be comfortable in the program. Staff have identified activities for the development of individual children based on observation of children's development. Staff provide opportunities for all children to succeed.

18 **Parents** provide input on child's readiness for various activities and their progress. Parents are involved in planning programs for children. Staff help parents understand how home activities can reinforce and extend children's learnings.

Indications of Problems with Early Childhood Component

- Children are unhappy, unsure, or tense.
- Activities are primarily adult-initiated.
- Staff are not aware of children's previous or other current child care experiences.
- Materials are skimpy or inappropriate for age.
- Activities are limited to traditional school readiness or group activities.
- Staff do not understand goals of family literacy or have not received special training in family literacy.
- Staff have infrequent contact with parents. Parents are not encouraged to visit classrooms.
- Parents are not clear about what their children are experiencing, and its value.
- Parents are not clear about their children's progress.
- Staff rely only on standardized assessments for gauging children's progress.
- Staff rely solely on prepackaged materials. There is frequent use of worksheets.
- Classrooms are quiet; children are not encouraged to talk with each other.
- There is frequent turnover or changing of staff so that relationships with children are not continuous.
- Staff do not connect activities to developmental outcomes.
- All children do the same activities.
- Classroom is dominated with commercially prepared materials.

Primary Sources: See NAEYC Guidelines, Even Start Evaluations in Reference Section.

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An Even Start Snapshot: Early Childhood

(based on an example from Oklahoma City Even Start program and Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions)

Many Even Start children attend this Head Start class for their early childhood program. In this classroom, activity areas are identified by signs and posters pictorially describing the area and giving children the **English and Spanish** words for each activity area. "Life size" materials are used by the children, such as real cereal boxes, telephone books, and full-size pots and pans. Parents and children have brought in family photos which are labelled in English and the language spoken at home if it is different. **Projects made at home by parents and children are displayed** at school. In turn, parents are encouraged to display their children's work at home.

A staff member responds warmly to a young child's demand for attention, hoping to model this for the mother when she comes into the classroom for her parent/child activity time. When children miss their classes for a period of time, the Head Start teacher talks to the Even Start contact. One of them sends cards and makes telephone calls and home visits to follow-up on each child's needs. Staff recognize that parents, overwhelmed by other concerns, can easily misread their children's behavior. By talking to parents about the different ways children strive to get attention, staff hope they are **encouraging the parents to establish secure attachment patterns with their children.**

Staff consider the **children's interests and experiences** in planning classroom activities and individual activities for home visits. One teacher observed a quiet child **enjoying** the dress-up closet. The teacher showed the child where the "overnight suitcase" was so she could take some of the dress up clothes **home to show her mother.** When another child showed an interest in oceans, the water-table becomes an ocean, adding

sand and shells, and the windows become underwater scenes, sticking cutout fish and seaweed on blue tempera painted on the window glass. Children draw pictures about their families and dictate a story about a family event to a teacher. During the parent and child activity time, **parents help their children make this into a book.** Parents are encouraged to write down at home what children say. A **library,** operated by an adult student, is available for parents and children to check out books on a daily basis.

Children are encouraged to **take responsibility for their actions** and look ahead. Staff ask the children to generate alternatives, and later to evaluate possible consequences. Staff question children with: What else could you try? How else could you solve that problem? What will you do next? Children are taught through modeling to use words to solve their problems. Rules are short and simple. Children are given exact directions; explanations about appropriate behavior are clear.

Team planning time is set aside for teachers working in the same classroom. **Staff from Head Start and Even Start** meet at a specific time each week and discuss the action plans for each family on a rotating basis. They jointly go on home visits to learn more about each family's home environment. A file is kept for each child at Head Start with the **teacher's observations** and samples of the child's work. Teachers **share this information with parents** during their conference. On one occasion parents attended the preschool class without their children and role-played in the activity areas. Teachers took this opportunity to explain to parents what the children learn during various activities, such as water play, painting, cooking, etc.

RETENTION OF FAMILIES

Challenge *To keep families participating long enough in the program to achieve learning gains and improvements in parenting.*

Early Start Note Many of the indicators in other sections relate directly to retention and they have not been repeated here.

Quality Considerations

1. All families participate in **all core components.**

2. Most families stay in the program long enough to **meet goals** they have set. The program works with families to set attainable, meaningful goals. Appropriate symbols of attainment are identified, e.g., voter registration, license, marriage, and successes are celebrated. Parents participate as a group in identifying meaningful incentives and recognition.

3. Family participation begins with an **orientation** period that focuses on positive reasons for participation, socialization, setting goals, and understanding expectations.

4. Program provides **continuous services,** including during the summer months, although the format of services may change, e.g., home visits may become more frequent if center-based services are not operating for a period of time.

5. Program demonstrates **high expectations** for the self-sufficiency of families, e.g., by identifying meaningful roles for parents within the program or agency, arranging job-shadowing at local businesses or volunteer opportunities in schools and community agencies, using program graduates as mentors for participants, finding different ways to use strengths.

6. **Self-esteem** of participants and staff is supported within the program.

7. Program demonstrates **respect for families** by building on interests and recognizing traditions, acknowledging values of families, and addressing families' critical needs. Program staff demonstrate personal interest in families.

8. **Direct service staff** in programs are empowered to address all the needs and interests of parents by providing appropriate resources and making referrals.

9 Program service schedules are **flexible** and convenient. Strategies for delivering service are flexible and adaptable to meet changing family needs, e.g., more home-based services might be necessary for families with new babies.

10 The program offers some activities for the **whole family.**

11 Program **continues contact** with families. If participant does not show up as expected, program staff follow up to find out the reason. If family drops out for personal reasons, program maintains periodic contact. Program invites back successful graduates to work with participants.

12 Records show that **services continue** to be available to an eligible family even though a child or parent may have completed the program.

13 Program staff or adjunct **staff** reflect the ethnic diversity and language backgrounds of the families enrolled.

Indications of Problems with Retention

- Family participation is uneven across the components, i.e., some parents may attend parent support groups regularly but not participate in adult literacy.
- Program experiences high turnover.
- Program loses participants over the summer months.
- Parents are not achieving specific goals because goals are not clear, goals are too ambitious or unrealistic, or program activities do not connect to goals.
- Support services, e.g., transportation, child care, counseling, are not available, limited in availability, or tenuous.
- Parents have not developed close relationships with peers in the program.
- Staff are not aware of families' needs and interests.
- Participants do not have a sense of the program — don't know why they are participating.
- Program components have limited availability in terms of scheduled offerings.
- Part-time staff are not available for staff meetings and planning.

An Even Start Snapshot: Retention

(based on an example from Webster Groves, Missouri Even Start program and Even Start National Evaluation program description)

This Even Start Program appears busy today, maybe even chaotic to a visitor. Clarisa, a parent enrolled in Even Start with her two preschool children, is **volunteering** at the reception desk. She is on a **recruiting committee** which was initiated by the parents last year. Clarisa also participates in a **peer support program** for new families. Other parents serve on an advisory board and various committees for Even Start within the district. Clarisa arrived this morning on the school bus contracted by Even Start to **provide transportation for families** between its public school trips. Clarisa reports that her preschool children are ready first every morning for their "school." They carry on if she wants to skip the program. She also knows that Joyce, one of the Even Start **parent educators, will call or come by** if she misses a day at the center. Joyce always tells parents when she calls what they missed when they didn't show up and what is coming up so that they won't want to miss the next day. Joyce has helped Clarisa establish a routine so that she can show up on time. Staff talked to Clarisa **and scheduled her core Even Start components at convenient times** for her. The coupons from local merchants awarded for good attendance are an added incentive for Clarisa.

Staff concern for families is important. You'll hear staff say "I'm so glad you came today." Clarisa loves seeing staff hugging her children. Clarisa feels very comfortable and welcomed at the center; she hopes to **stay in the program long enough** to get her GED this year and go on to become a medical technician. She has already written an article about last month's outing for the program's newsletter and feels very comfortable answering the telephone when she volunteers as the program's receptionist one day a month. Clarisa said last week, "I can't believe that I was scared to come in the door the first day!" She is looking forward to the **"Celebrate Success"** party for GED graduates. Staff have helped her **believe that she can achieve her goals.**

Another role for parents is running a lending library for toys and books, which is open during the thirty-minute break between adult education classes. Clarisa has won gift certificates for taking out ten books in one week from the lending library.

Fathers are encouraged to volunteer in the classrooms to act as role models. At the same time, they become more familiar with the programs and comfortable having their wives attend. The local community participates in a **mentoring program.** Many Even Start parents may not have someone as a positive role model. Information is provided to the parents about the guidelines and expectations of both the mentors and parents.

Staff and parents plan **special family events** where staff and families can socialize together, such as picnics, garage sales, talent shows, fashion shows, sleep-overs, camp-outs, educational field trips, cultural interpretations, make-and-take workshops, health fairs, and computer family days. **All family members** are invited to special events to feel a part of the program. **Ethnic celebrations** are particularly popular. Last year, **a group of fathers** provided the entertainment. Monthly pot luck suppers generally follow a particular structure. A family-style dinner is followed by a presentation designed to interest both parents and children plus an activity based on the presentation. The purposes of the dinners are several: to provide **an experience that is both social and educational;** to provide a family-centered activity; and to bring parents into the school building in a non-threatening way.

TRANSITIONS

Challenge

To be a transitional opportunity through which families chart a course for change, gain necessary skills, and reach their goals. Even Start offers a stable base for families while building bridges for transitions and other types of changes that family members must naturally make.

Even Start Note

Many different types of transitions are referenced here into Even Start, from home to school, to employment, to different services.

Quality Considerations

1. Program recognizes that it can play a role in smoothing the **horizontal transitions** (e.g., between Even Start and Head Start and/or day care) and **vertical transitions** (e.g., between basic adult literacy and GED preparation or pre-vocational training) that adults and children make. Program has policy or plan for specific transition activities, including plan for an orientation to Even Start. Program staff identify timelines for specific transition activities.

2. Program views family members as **life-long learners** and looks for opportunities to engage them in activities beyond the Even Start program.

3. Staff and families **plan together** for transition support. Transition planning addresses how comprehensive services can continue when service delivery mechanisms or eligibility changes. Transition activities include building familiarity with new settings and new programs.

4. **Staff development** includes building awareness of cultural influences on learning, interactions, and parenting. Training addresses ways to integrate home culture and school or workplace activities, and strengthens the awareness of other service providers about cultural influences. Staff development includes building awareness of other service delivery systems.

5. Program prepares for **transitions of children to school** in some specific ways:
   a. planning for transition becomes a topic within parenting classes and home visits
   b. early childhood programs prepare children directly, including visitations, role playing, and modeling new routines
   c. program lets parents know about rights and responsibilities and encourages parental participation in school in a variety of ways

d. program helps parents with ways to deal with children's anxieties

e. program staff establish communication with next teachers to share information about child's developmental progress

f. program staff take proactive role with school staff (and staff from other early childhood programs) to help bridge cultural and language differences, to help staff gain an understanding of parents' involvement, and/or help staff recognize strengths of families who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.

6 Program prepares for **transitions of adults** in some specific ways.

a. class time is spent in job readiness skills and discussions of educational and training opportunities

b. program maintains connections with employers and postsecondary institutions to facilitate next steps for adults

c. adults develop a plan for goal attainment, including timeline and resource requirements

d. class time is spent on how to access community services and solve problems.

7 **Children who enter school are successful.** School staff see parents as supportive of children's learning and development. Children and families continue to receive appropriate services such as Title I upon school entry if needed.

8 Adults who receive GEDs seek additional education or training or obtain **employment.**

9 **Program adjusts** to family transitions (e.g., divorce, birth, relocation) that occur within the context of the Even Start program and adjusts program services to meet needs of families during times of transition.

Indications of Problems with Transitions

- No planning time is devoted to transitions.
- Staff express hostile attitudes toward other settings.
- Staff expect transition planning to be initiated by other setting.
- Families drop out of program at point of transitions.
- Staff do not take an active role in reaching out to other service providers. Staff are not familiar with staff in other settings to which parents and children are going.
- Transition is seen as an event rather than an ongoing process.

PRIMARY SOURCES: SEE NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION, RMC RESEARCH IN REFERENCE SECTION.

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An Even Start Snapshot: Transitions

(based on Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions and Transition Study, RMC Research)

Hosea and his mother will have many changes in the fall. Hosea will be spending a full day at kindergarten and his mother, Angela, will be coming to the Even Start site full time for her adult education and parenting classes. At the Even Start parenting classes when they **discussed the topic of transition,** Hosea's mother felt comfortable expressing her concerns about being in the center full time and being separated from Hosea all day. Angela learned that three years ago a **working community committee** was established to plan how to best facilitate a smooth transition for children entering kindergarten.

Several effective transition policies are now in place. For instance, **Even Start staff meet with the kindergarten teachers each spring** to discuss each child and focus on what works well for the child in the classroom setting. At this meeting, they exchange ideas about what worked and did not work well programmatically during the past year. They use this opportunity to set up joint **training in early childhood** for both staffs in the upcoming year. Talking about her concerns gave Angela reassurance about Hosea's transition and she began to become excited about spending more time at the center for herself.

Hosea was given the screening test for kindergarten at Even Start to see if there were any disabilities that require further attention. **Even Start staff explained all of the services** and special opportunities for children and families in the public schools. Angela feels that she is better **able to seek out available services for Hosea.** Angela's home visitor encourages her to read to Hosea, find or start a playgroup during the summer, and spend individual time with Hosea as preparation for the changes to occur this fall. Hosea's Even Start early childhood teacher has already **agreed to accompany Angela** to the scheduled parent orientation at the public

school in a few weeks. Hosea and his Even Start friends who are going to kindergarten together are scheduled to visit the kindergarten class with their Even Start teacher.

Angela received a **voucher for public transportation** prior to her first visit to Hosea's new kindergarten classroom. She was told that these vouchers would be available for any visits she might like to make to help out in the classroom during the school year. Angela received an information packet in the mail in **both English and Spanish.** She was able to share it with Hosea's grandmother who only speaks and reads Spanish. **At their orientation meeting,** Angela was informed about the developmental nature of the kindergarten program. She learned that a high level of parent involvement was welcomed and encouraged, and that her opinion of how Hosea is doing is very valuable to the teachers. There will be two scheduled parent-teacher conferences a year, and frequent written correspondence and informal telephone contact. Hosea's Even Start teacher told Angela if it would be helpful, she would be happy to review any of the materials from the public schools with her at any time. Angela knows that she will **visit Hosea each week in kindergarten as part of the parent/child interaction for Even Start.** She was very pleased about this.

Hosea and his mother went to a fair held in the school gym later in the week. The gym was transformed into a gigantic kindergarten classroom that both the adults and the children could experience. The families participated in some "make-and-take" activities and explored the learning centers with their children. Angela arranged her schedule at Even Start so she can accompany Hosea his first day. Angela is feeling much better about their transitions this fall.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Challenge *To prepare Even Start staff and staff from collaborating agencies to work effectively with families.*

Quality Considerations

1. Staff development is explicitly **connected** to the goals of Even Start. Training is provided in Even Start and family literacy philosophies.

2. Staff development is systematic and **ongoing**. Individual activities build on or complement each other.

3. Staff have a role in **identifying training needs.** Staff are involved in planning training. Input about training needs is sought from a variety of sources, including collaborating agencies, parents, evaluation results, advisory groups, and national trends.

4. A **variety of learning** approaches is encouraged, including self-directed learning, mentoring, action research, and peer coaching.

5. Staff development includes attention to **theory base** as well as **practical** applications in real situations. Training activities build on the knowledge and skills of participants. Staff development includes demonstration and modeling and opportunities to practice new skills for transfer with feedback and coaching as well as adequate time for follow-up after application.

6. Some staff development activities are designed to **motivate staff** and build positive attitudes. Most staff development topics are chosen to improve instruction or enhance relationships with families.

7. Some staff development training includes development of sensitivity to **cultural** issues associated with the families served, including understanding one's own cultural identity and biases as well as training in communication skills with families, staff, and community. Staff development includes attention to a **strengths-based approach** to family development, focusing on identifying and building from what a family does well.

8. Trainers have **knowledge and experience** base for the content area. Content is up to date.

9. **Training for early childhood** includes information about at least one nationally-recognized curriculum or model. **Training for adult education** instructors includes methods of teaching beginning learners, ways to address learn-

ing disabilities and whole language strategies that include ways of using experiences as a basis for writing and reading.

10 Training is **cross-disciplinary**, i.e., adult educators are trained in early childhood along with early childhood staff and vice versa. Learning approaches use staff's varying routes into the field of family literacy as assets to enrich each other's knowledge, e.g., use of cooperative learning activities.

11 Staff development includes participants from **collaborating agencies** with training opportunities occurring at multiple sites.

12 Program provides **incentives** for participating in staff development, including paid time, transportation as required, and advancement potential. Scheduling permits all staff, including part-time staff, to participate in staff development activities.

13 **Evaluation** of staff development addresses benefits and applications, not simply satisfaction.

14 Program creates a mechanism for ongoing **information sharing** among staff. Staff development includes opportunities to reflect on the Even Start program in the context of community needs and ongoing initiatives.

Indications of Problems with Staff Development

- ▶ Attendance is low at staff development activities.
- ▶ Staff do not see the connection between staff development and pressing on-the-job needs.
- ▶ Staff development activities are discrete and unconnected.
- ▶ Staff development is limited to information-based large group instruction.
- ▶ All staff development is conducted by program staff members.
- ▶ Staff development is available for selected staff members only.
- ▶ There is no budget for staff development.
- ▶ Staff from collaborating agencies do not participate.
- ▶ Administrative staff do not participate.
- ▶ Scheduling does not allow all staff to attend.
- ▶ There has been no assessment of the effectiveness of staff development efforts.

PRIMARY SOURCES: SEE PELAVIN IN REFERENCE SECTION.

An Even Start Snapshot: Staff Development

(based on an example from Oklahoma City and Manhattan, Kansas Even Start programs and Even Start National Evaluation program descriptions)

At each of this program's staff meetings, staff members are **informed of upcoming training opportunities.** The Even Start director participates in the school district's staff development planning. Last year, the school district offered a series of free training workshops in early childhood which included discussions about child development and curriculum. Even Start and other community preschool staff were encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. One goal of the director is to hire or retrain at least one adult education teacher in early childhood education to improve curriculum planning across all Even Start components. **All staff regardless of discipline** take advantage of the **ongoing** training sessions offered in the district.

Staff development can be both formal and informal opportunities for reflection and skill building. Staff spend time in discussion about **understanding their own cultural biases** and developing strategies to work with families, **building on what the families are doing well,** rather than what they are not doing. Staff trainings have included sessions on how to make **classrooms more culturally sensitive.** Every effort is made to hire staff who mirror the culture and ethnicity of families. Part-time staff begin work in the fall before the formal program begins and are required to participate in a two-day orientation with existing staff. Volunteers, who might be graduates from Even Start or people from the community, have a similar orientation course they must attend. There is an **ongoing staff supervision plan** coordinated by the director. The goal of staff supervision is to strengthen the capacity of staff to know their families and alter the program to fit the educational goals and needs of the whole family.

Staff members suggest topics for workshops without being asked. Recent requests included **training with collaborating agencies** about domestic violence, Title I, and special education. Even Start **subscribes to many professional periodicals** and has them available for checkout. Articles are routinely copied (with proper credit given) and distributed to staff for reading and discussion. Whenever a staff member attends a conference, he or she is expected to **share ideas and handouts with the whole staff** at staff meetings or during specially scheduled times. Staff members are sometimes asked to present materials in their field of expertise. Staff share real anecdotes at staff meetings to learn from each other. Staff also share inspirational topics and sayings at weekly staff meetings and at group meetings with families. Staff members **serve on numerous community boards and task forces.** Many participate in community "brown bag luncheons" with social service agencies.

Staff meetings become a format for staff development. Some are used as **peer supervision opportunities** in which a staff member discusses his or her work with specific families as a strategy for modelling for peers as well as for coaching from peers. Other staff meetings are set aside for presentations or topic discussions. Staff meetings take place **each Friday** when families are not scheduled to come into the center. Each August, **staff have a retreat** to evaluate the year and suggest new directions. One of the tasks at the retreat is to plan the staff development themes and assign responsibility to schedule community-wide events involving many agencies and, occasionally, their clients.

SECTION III

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SECTION IV

PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT

The following pages contain a self-assessment tool using the quality considerations in The Guide to Quality for Even Start Family Literacy Programs. For each quality consideration under each topic indicate how descriptive that consideration is of your program (1=very descriptive, 5=not at all descriptive). Write notes that explain your rating. We invite you to use these rating scales to examine aspects of operations as a way of identifying strengths and weaknesses, determining where local evaluation might be focused, or planning staff development.

INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS

To connect program activities through meaningful and consistent messages, providing an intense experience to change intergenerational patterns associated with low literacy

Holistic Approach

1 All program components employ a **holistic approach to serving families;** that is, activities and plans are based on goals and interests identified by families rather than relying on preset materials.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Common Messages

2 Program has identified **common messages** to be emphasized across components, e.g., the value of literacy, high expectations for families, the importance of the application and transfer of skills, the role of experience in development, the importance of practice, the use of individual strengths, the central role of the parent in a child's development. Staff are able to articulate these common messages to each other, to families, and to the community so that others understand the messages.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Reinforced Messages

3 Program sees the concept of integration as a way of planning opportunities to surround families with **messages that are continuously reinforced.** Program recognizes the need for integration of components and experiences as a way to intensify the program experience.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS FROM GUIDE TO QUALITY FOR EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS (1995) PORTSMOUTH, NH: RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION

INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS

Connections

4 Program implements **specific connections across components,** for example

a. home visit and parenting activities have literacy connections

b. parenting time addresses issues that arise during home visits or parent-child interactions

c. the home visit provides an opportunity to provide applications of what has been discussed during parenting time

d. literacy skills for adults are taught in the context of early childhood development, parenting, use of community resources, employment

e. parent-child and home visit activities are designed with ease of transfer to the home in mind

f. home visits are connected to center-based instruction

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Approaches

5 Program uses a **variety of approaches to establish linkages** across components based on meaningful themes, learner strategies (e.g., asking questions), particular activities, and values or attitudes

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS FROM GUIDE TO QUALITY FOR EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS (1995) PORTSMOUTH, NH: RMC RESEARCH CORPORATION

INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Program Leadership

8

Program staff understand the importance of integration at both the program level and the family level. The program's management structure is designed to facilitate integration of components. **Program leadership** takes an active role in fostering integration of components. Component integration is a staff development and supervision issue.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Planning Time

7

Program ensures that team members meet together regularly/daily to plan together. **Planning time** is paid time within the work day. There is an opportunity for all staff to be part of planning home visits.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Staff Development

8

Staff development includes includes specific training in family literacy. Staff development includes cross-training in the several disciplines involved and addresses team building.

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NOTES

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INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS

Interdisciplinary Approach

8 Whole language strategies are used with adults and children. Staff use an **interdisciplinary approach** to curriculum.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Parent Involvement

10 **Parents** are involved in designing children's activities. Parents are welcome in children's classrooms. They are frequently invited to participate, and special provisions are made if it is difficult for parents to attend.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

COLLABORATION

To develop a strong partnership of service providers that jointly take responsibility for providing family literacy services, and develop new relationships and systems to improve services for families

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Benefits to Families

1 Program staff have a comprehensive view of the needs of families and recognize the need for a partnership in order to fully serve families. Staff see the focus of the partnership as **benefits to families;** secondary benefits are to partner agencies. Mutual objectives in terms of goals for families and the partner and other collaborating agencies have been articulated.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Multiple Relationships

2 The program has developed **multiple relationships** with other agencies. The number of collaborators increases over the life of the program. Collaborations lead to new relationships for the program. Program staff recognize the value of a variety of joint arrangements, including referral and communication, cooperation, and collaboration.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Variety of Agencies

3 Program collaborators represent a **variety of agencies,** serving different types of family needs. Alliances have been developed in the areas of health, social services, counseling, education, and job training or placement. Collaborators include housing authorities, homeless shelters, WIC programs, libraries, ITPA, adult education programs, Head Start, vocational programs, voluntary literacy organizations, Title I and other programs funded through the Improving America's School Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Even Start program has expanded upon the services available from collaborators based on the needs of the families served. Program has relationships with multiple providers of early childhood and adult education services. Even Start is not duplicating existing services.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

COLLABORATION

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Referrals

4 **Referrals** for program have come from collaborators. Even Start families have been referred to collaborators for services. Even Start staff stay in touch with collaborators about families they have referred.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

NOTES

Sharing Information

5 Program and collaborators **share information about families** when possible to improve and tailor service options. Confidentiality issues have been addressed; programs know what information can and cannot be shared. Collaborating partners make decisions on the basis of family needs and goals. Program and collaborators have attempted to standardize procedures to minimize barriers to services, including developing common terminology and definitions of clients.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

NOTES

Training as Incentive

8 Program offers **training as an incentive** for collaborators. Collaborating staff train together to build "buy in" to Even Start approaches and philosophy.

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NOTES

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COLLABORATION

Partners & Collaborators

7 Program has made formal and informal agreements with **partners and other collaborators**, beginning in the early stages of preparing applications. Agreements might include: description of services each offers; designation of roles and contacts; fiscal arrangements and sources of funding; length of agreement and option for renewal; communication mechanisms and expectations; procedures for problem-solving.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Communication

8 Program recognizes that key staff time is required to attend to building and maintaining collaborative relationships. **Communication** is regular and frequent and program staff visit each others' program sites. Program leadership communicates with leadership of other agencies on a continual basis.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Boundary-crossing Roles

9 Some staff have **"boundary-crossing" roles** with collaborators; that is, they make connections based on their cross-disciplinary experiences with staff of other agencies.

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COLLABORATION

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Relationships

10 Ownership in the **relationship with collaborators** is built at all levels. Staff are well-informed about the roles and missions of the collaborators. Staff also know each others' constraints. Staff express attitude of respect for collaborators and their contributions and a willingness to work together to solve problems that arise.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Information

11 Program has provided **information** to help other agencies understand Even Start goals and clarified any misunderstandings. All staff members can articulate the key messages of Even Start.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Evaluation Results

12 Collaborators have a role in identifying outcomes for local evaluation and an interest in **evaluation results.** Collaborating agencies cooperate with data collection as needed. Even Start local evaluation addresses successes and improvements in collaborations.

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NOTES

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COLLABORATION

Family Role

13 **Families have a role** in identifying possible collaborators. Families select resources that are most appropriate for them.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE				NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE
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NOTES

RECRUITMENT

To recruit those families most in need, specifically low-income disadvantaged families with low literacy rates or limited English proficiency at program entry

Multiple Methods

1 Program uses **multiple methods and sources** for recruitment including methods that employ personal contact.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

High Visibility

2 Strategies for recruitment include distribution of informational materials about the program in **high visibility** locations such as laundromats and stores. Materials are prepared in the **languages** of the population that the program serves. Strategies include methods that do not **depend on print** such as personal contact and informal meetings.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Cultural Diversity

3 Recruitment strategies and messages reflect the **cultural diversity** of the community and the intended target families. Recruitment processes take cultural norms into account (e.g., which family member is contacted, expectations of all family members).

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NOTES

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RECRUITMENT

Program Participants

4 Current and past **program participants** have an important and planned role in recruiting parents.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Proactive Recruitment

5 Recruitment is **proactive,** especially in areas of high poverty: that is, likely participants are sought out and encouraged to enter. Several different types of contacts are made to encourage participation, as necessary. Programs recognize the preparation time it may take to recruit some families.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Staff Involvement

6 Recruitment is considered part of **everyone's job.**

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NOTES

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RECRUITMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Ongoing

7 Recruitment is **ongoing.** Program recognizes that different levels of intensity for recruitment are required at different stages in program development. Program pays attention to shifts in community population and reviews recruitment strategies regularly.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

NOTES

Expectations

8 Program provides clear messages **about expectations** associated with participation so parents have full knowledge to help them make the commitment to enroll. Family commitment to participation in the program is important, and program helps those most in need overcome barriers to full participation. Anticipated barriers to the family's full participation in the program, e.g., transportation and child care, are addressed during the recruitment process. Solutions to barriers are sought before the family begins participation.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

NOTES

Outcomes

9 Recruitment messages emphasize what the program can do for the whole family, assuming an **outcomes/goals orientation** as the selling point.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

NOTES

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RECRUITMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Easy Process

10 The recruitment **process is made as easy and friendly** as possible for families, e.g., pre-enrollment information is gathered in the home.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Community Collaborators

11 Program has established reciprocal **relationships with community collaborators** for recruitment. Even Start staff are active within various community agencies in service and volunteer roles.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Selection Criteria

12 When selecting participants, a variety of family needs are considered in determining "most in need," including the information from referring agencies, family stresses, and health of family members. Program **selection criteria** (e.g., level of adult literacy, family income, employment status) are written and available to all staff, parents, and collaborators. The program has made its methods explicit, e.g., weighing criteria for ranking participants according to need.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

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PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

To have a positive impact on the whole family by enhancing the relationships between parents and children and the literacy value of interactions.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Opportunities

1 Program provides **regularly scheduled opportunities** for parent-child interaction as well as other types of parent education and support.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Variety of Participation

2 The parenting component includes a **variety of ways that parents can participate**, including individual and group involvement. Planning allows for a range of types and levels of participation based on family goals.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Staff

3 **All staff** receive training in parenting as part of their jobs.

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PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

Relationships

4 Staff spend time developing **relationships** with parents but are aware of appropriate boundaries. Staff members have an empathetic view of parents and the challenges they face.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Improvements

5 In programs that intend to produce substantial improvements in outcomes for children, parents participate about **twenty hours a month** in parenting-related activities, including home visiting, parent discussion groups, and parent-child literacy activities.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Family Development

8 Parenting program includes attention to **family development** and family relationships. Parenting program includes attention to supporting parental **self-esteem.** Parenting program is used as an opportunity for identifying **resources** to support families.

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PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Interests of Parents

7 Parenting program builds on the **interests and questions of parents,** and does not rely solely on scripted materials. Parents are actively involved in the design and planning of parenting activities perhaps through an advisory council. Ongoing assessments by parents are used to ensure responsiveness of activities to parents' interests and needs.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Social Interactions

8 Program planning attends to the need for parents to relate to their peers and allows time for **social interaction.**

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Child-raising

9 Parenting program includes attention to **beliefs and attitudes about child-raising** in addition to dealing with positive behavior management. Program provides guided opportunities for parents to problem-solve within the context of routine family events.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Parent-child Activities

10 Parent-child activities are intended to help the parent **learn more about his/her own child** and see the child as an active contributor to development and learning. Activities help parents form reasonable expectations of their child's achievement and devise challenging experiences. Teacher-parent debriefing follows at least some parent-child experiences. There are opportunities to reflect on how what has been learned about child development applies to the activity.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Variety of Topics

11 Program recognizes importance of addressing the most pressing concerns of families. Program has identified collaborators who can support parenting activities; collaborators might include libraries, counseling programs, IOBS, ITPA, Reading Is Fundamental, cooperative extension. Parenting program addresses a wide **variety of topics** of interest and importance to families, including nutrition, wellness, household management, community resources, and dealing with stress, substance abuse, and family violence.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

One-to-One

12 Parent development and child development issues and questions are addressed frequently and directly. Program affords opportunities for **one-to-one** interchanges for dealing with parenting issues.

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PARENT-CHILD
INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Active Involvement

13 Parent-child activities encourage active manipulation of a variety of objects, engagement of children in problem-solving and thinking, and **active involvement** in reading stories. Activities are fun and encourage involvement of both child and parent. Children exercise choice and decision-making. Parents communicate with and listen to their child rather than instruct.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Reading

14 **Reading every day** is encouraged. Program helps parents to learn about sources of books for children and themselves, including becoming borrowers at public libraries.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Transfer

15 Activities are designed for easy **transfer of learning** to other situations. Expectations for and ideas about transfer and practice are made explicit. Teachers follow up transfer expectations.

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PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Literacy Connections

18 Parenting activities have **literacy connections**; parent-child activities have enhanced literacy value. Parent education strengthens literacy experiences that occur within routine family interactions. Parenting is integrated into the teaching of basic academic skills.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Whole Family

17 Program devises opportunities for the **whole family** to participate in parenting activities.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Culture and Language

18 The materials used in parenting and parent-child activities are **culturally and linguistically relevant**. Parent-child activities are carried out in the dominant language of families.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS & PARENTING

Partnerships

19 Program designs activities to strengthen **partnerships between parents and school** programs and personnel. Parents participate in variety of school and classroom activities, including volunteering, governance, and home learning activities.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE				NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE
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NOTES

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HOME VISITING

To individualize the program for parents and children, building on the strengthts that are apparent in familiar settings and to demonstrate that the home is the child's first and most important learning environment. Home visits increase the intensity of the program experience as well as increasing access to services for some families.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Objectives

1

All families receive home visits with an **instructional focus** and educational objectives. The **number of visits** and the length of visits vary by program model and family need. Unless the home is the primary site for services, project ideally conducts at least one home visit a month for each family, acknowledging that it may take some time in group participation for some families to be comfortable with home visits.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Literacy

2

The home visit is used as an opportunity for the parent and child to learn and play together. **Literacy is a primary focus** of activities. The home visit supports retention of families in all components.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Individualization

3

Materials and approaches for the home visit are **tailored** for each family. The resources and materials found in the home are the basis of activities. Home visitors build upon and adapt to the family environment, seeking transfer of home visit activities to daily interactions between parent and child.

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HOME VISITING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Scheduling

4 Home visits are prearranged, planned, and regularly **scheduled.** Scheduling of home visits depends on individual and family schedules. Home visitor staff and families understand the importance of the home visit and make the environment conducive to learning.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Active Roles

5 **Parents have an active role** in shaping the visit and in the debriefing of the visit. The home visitor plans with the parent activities or roles for the other adults and children who are likely to be present during the home visit.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Rapport

8 Program highly values highly home visitor **rapport with families** and families' comfort with home visitor. Rapport with families in the program is key for staff selection and supervision. Home visits are conducted by a familiar service provider for continuity.

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HOME VISITING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Staff Development

7 **Staff development** for home visitors includes team debriefing of experiences they have had in the home, for example, for twelve hours of direct service, approximately one hour of supervision, coaching, mentoring, is provided, including structured discussions among staff.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Links to Resources

8 Home visiting staff view visits as an information **bridge to other resources.** Home visitors have backup support to link families to resources. Home visiting staff receive training in dealing with issues that may arise in the home setting, e.g., abuse, violence, substance abuse, safety in the home, and emergency procedures. Formal relationships with agencies help to address families with multiple needs.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Transition

9 Program recognizes that some families may require a **transition period** before they are comfortable with and committed to home visits. Temporary alternate locations such as libraries are identified in cases where the family initially is uncomfortable with the visit occurring in the home.

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HOME VISITING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Integration

10 The home visit is **linked to other program components.**

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NOTES

Family Culture

11 Home visitors demonstrate **sensitivity to family culture**. Ideally, home visitors speak the first language of the family or involve collaborators who share the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of families.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Balance

12 Home visits **balance** parent-child relationship building, child development, and attention to parents' needs and interests.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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HOME VISITING

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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Observation

13 Home visitors help parents to **observe children** and point out developmental interpretations of children's actions. Home visitors model interactions and reinforcements.

NOTES

Boundaries

14 Home visitor staff are able to set **boundaries** for their roles in working with families.

NOTES

Service Providers

15 Program **coordinates** home visit activities **with other service providers** who also make home visits to the same families.

NOTES

ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

To improve the self-sufficiency of families by enabling them to meet their goals, increasing the English language literacy levels of family members, enhancing skills and experiences related to employability, and improving parents' abilities to be advocates for and teachers of their children.

Goals

1 Adult students have **short and long term goals** for their participation in adult education. The goals represent realistic expectations and take into consideration previous educational experiences. Those goals are expressed in a written plan and are measurable or observable. Adults' individual goals shape the program and are directly and explicitly connected to instruction. Goals are revisited periodically and progress toward goal attainment is assessed.

Outcomes

2 The program values a **wide variety of outcomes** (e.g., obtaining drivers' license, reading to children, obtaining high school diplomas) for adult learners.

Progress

3 Adults' progress in literacy depends on their literacy levels at program entry. Most adults make constant **progress on literacy indicators** until they exit the program. Among adults who do not obtain their high school diploma or equivalent, most continue in the program long enough to receive on average at least 70 hours of adult education prior to leaving the program. For those for whom the GED is an appropriate goal, most who enter the program at high school literacy levels obtain their high school diploma or equivalent within a year. Most who obtain their high school diploma or equivalent in the program continue to pursue other goals, including employment or continued education.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

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VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Context

4 Academic content is taught within a **functional context** (e.g., workplace, parenting, and/or life skills) appropriate to the lives of adult learners. Content is integrated with other components. Adult education includes life skills, computation, and language. Language literacy includes more than reading, i.e., speaking, writing, listening, and computer skills.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Methods

5 A **mix of methods** is used for instruction, including a balance of group and individual activities. The instructional mix includes activities such as self-directed independent learning, computer-aided instruction, cooperative learning, and individual tutoring. Adult students write regularly. The program employs strategies in a flexible manner.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Learner Levels

8 Materials are appropriate for the **range of learner levels** represented in the program (as assessed at program entry), usually requiring a wide variety of materials. Materials are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the learners. Materials include authentic items, i.e., newspapers, forms, magazine articles, announcements, etc. Materials reflect the context of the adult student's life, including work place items.

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ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Prior Knowledge

7 Instruction and learning activities explicitly build from learners' **prior knowledge.** Instruction emphasizes association of new learnings with daily life and encourages applications and transfer of learning to new situations. Connections are made to children's instructional programs and to the activities of home visits.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Flexibility

8 Program design offers maximum **flexibility** for the adult learner in terms of format, schedule, and location as well as entry options. Program actively encourages re-entry if absence from program has occurred.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Learning Needs

9 **Staff are knowledgeable** about learning needs of adults. Staff are knowledgeable about learners' cultures and languages. Staff appear to have good rapport with students and are interested in building relationships with students. Whenever possible, the Even Start program manager is involved in selection of adult education staff.

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1 2 3 4 5

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ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Environment

10 The learning **environment** is adult-centered, i.e., appropriate and comfortable for adults.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Facilitators

11 Instructors act as **resources and facilitators,** modeling problem-solving behaviors. They avoid "helping" in a way that would increase or reinforce dependency.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Assessment

12 A combination of formal and informal **assessment** methods is used to identify progress and needs. Assessment is regular and frequent. Results are discussed with students and linked to learners' goals and to instructional plans. Ideally, assessments are carried out in the context of meaningful tasks. Adults understand assessment purposes, the results of assessments, and can explain their progress. Care is taken at intake so that adults value the role of assessment; testing may not be part of initial intake if not appropriate for the adult learner.

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ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Advancement

13 The program promotes advancement in learning beyond basic literacy. Job readiness and career exploration are a part of the curriculum. Program staff are knowledgeable about a range of options for participants to **continue their learning and/or obtain employment,** e.g., community college, vocational programs, ties to the business community. Programs work on transition plans with adult students to meet adults' goals, including long-term goals for self-sufficiency.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Barriers

14 Program staff work with learners to remove or **reduce common barriers,** e.g., lack of child care, transportation, by identifying appropriate support services.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Schedule

15 Program services are **continuous,** including summer months, although the format of services may change in different program cycles.

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NOTES

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ADULT EDUCATION
ADULT LITERACY

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Continuity

18 Staff turnover is low. Learners generally have the same instructor for the program year. If staff changes occur, program ensures **continuity** of approach to learning.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Staff Development

17 Staff participate in ongoing **staff development,** including training specifically related to family literacy. Staff are familiar with parenting and early childhood staff and exchange relevant information. Ideally, they meet at least weekly to plan an integrated curriculum.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Disabilities

18 Program staff are able to address the needs of adults with **learning disabilities.**

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

To enhance development and ease transition to school by providing developmentally appropriate settings for children of all ages from the families enrolled in Even Start.

Staff

1 Early childhood **staff members** are well qualified, trained in child development, and have appropriate certification by state requirements.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Licensing

2 Early childhood centers have received appropriate **licensing** from state.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Sufficient Hours

3 Children participate in **sufficient hours** of appropriate early childhood experience, including home visiting, Head Start, etc., ideally at least sixty hours monthly for children ages three through five.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Environment

4 The physical **environment** is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age appropriate in terms of furniture, equipment, materials, and access to bathrooms and clean-up facilities.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Interaction

5 The **adult-child ratio** allows for frequent **interaction** between children and adults. Adult-child ratios are consistent with state licensing standards. Children have sustained relationships with primary teachers/caregivers.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Developmental Areas

8 Early childhood program balances attention to **all areas of development** — social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.

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NOTES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Curricular Base

7 Program has a **curricular base** for all age groups served by the program. Early childhood curriculum has a respected theoretical base; staff make use of curricular philosophy when planning activities for individual children.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Experiences

8 Staff encourage direct, firsthand, interactive **experiences** for learning. Staff recognize that children develop knowledge and skills through active experiences and social interactions. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Classroom activities are integrated and interdisciplinary, building on children's interests and knowledge.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Child-Initiation

9 There are many opportunities for **child-initiated** learning. Children's play is respected by staff as legitimate learning time. Children are encouraged to plan. They participate in planning their day and are aware of basic schedules and routines.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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133

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Language

10 The environment is **language-rich.** Children are read to daily. Books and other reading material are abundant. Songs, rhymes, and group stories are common activities. The staff demonstrate many ways to encourage children to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Problem Solving

11 Staff encourage development of **reasoning and problem-solving** by providing challenging learning experiences, encouraging children's development through skillful questioning and suggestions for furthering activities.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Homes and Lives

12 Classroom environment reflects **homes and lives** of children in terms of culture and language. Children's work is displayed.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Behavior Management

13 Staff use **positive behavior management** for discipline

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Time to Plan

14 Staff have frequent opportunities and time to **plan** together and with staff of other Even Start components

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Progress

15 Teachers regularly **observe** all children and record observations for use in planning activities and assessing progress. Records of **progress and development** are maintained on each child and regularly shared with parents. Children are helped to understand their progress in learning.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM SETTINGS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Comfort

18 Children are **relaxed and happy** in the early childhood environment.

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NOTES

Developmental Approach

17 Program gears expected participation to the needs and **development of the child.** For example, program recognizes the time it may take for infants and toddlers to be comfortable in the program. Staff have identified activities for the development of individual children based on observation of children's development. Staff provide opportunities for all children to succeed.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Parents

18 **Parents** provide input on child's readiness for various activities and their progress. Parents are involved in planning programs for children. Staff help parents understand how home activities can reinforce and extend children's learnings.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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RETENTION OF FAMILIES

To keep families participating long enough in the program to achieve learning gains and improvements in parenting.

All Components

1 All families participate in **all core components.**

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

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NOTES

Goals

2 Most families stay in the program long enough to **meet goals** they have set. Program works with families to set attainable, meaningful goals. Appropriate symbols of attainment are identified, e.g., voter registration, license, marriage, and successes are celebrated. Parents participate as a group in identifying meaningful incentives and recognition.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Orientation

3 Family participation begins with an **orientation** period that focuses on positive reasons for participation, socialization, setting goals, and understanding expectations.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

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RETENTION OF FAMILIES

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Continuity

4 Program provides **continuous services,** including during the summer months, although the format of services may change, e.g., home visits may become more frequent if center-based services are not operating for a period of time.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Expectations

5 Program demonstrates **high expectations** for the self- sufficiency of families, e.g., by identifying meaningful roles for parents within the program or agency, arranging job shadowing at local businesses or volunteer opportunities in schools and community agencies, using program graduates as mentors for participants, finding different ways to use strengths.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Self-Esteem

8 **Self-esteem** of participants and staff is supported within the program.

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NOTES

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RETENTION OF FAMILIES

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Respect for Families

7 Program demonstrates **respect for families** by building on interests and recognizing traditions, acknowledging values of families, and addressing families' critical needs. Program staff demonstrate personal interest in families.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Staff Responsibilities

8 **Direct service staff** in programs are empowered to address all the needs and interests of parents by providing appropriate resources and making referrals.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Flexibility

9 Program service schedules are **flexible** and convenient. Strategies for delivering service are flexible and adaptable to meet changing family needs, e.g., more home-based services might be necessary for families with new babies.

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1 2 3 4 5

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RETENTION OF FAMILIES

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Whole Family

10 The program offers some activities for the **whole family.**

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NOTES

Continued Contact

11 Program **continues contact** with families. If participant does not show up as expected, program staff follow up to find out the reason. If family drops out for personal reasons, program maintains periodic contact. Program invites back successful graduates to work with participants.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Continued Service

12 Records show that **services continue** to be available to an eligible family even though a child or parent may have completed the program.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

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RETENTION OF FAMILIES

Staff Characteristics

13 Program staff or adjunct **staff** reflect the ethnic diversity and language backgrounds of the families enrolled.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

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NOTES

TRANSITIONS

To be a transitional opportunity through which families chart a course for change, gain necessary skills, and reach their goals. Even Start offers a stable base for families while building bridges for transitions and other types of changes that family members must naturally make.

Types of Transitions

1 Program recognizes that it can play a role in smoothing the **horizontal transitions** (e.g., between Head Start and day care) and **vertical transitions** (e.g., between basic adult literacy and GED preparation or pre-vocational training) **transitions** that adults and children make. Program has policy or plan for specific transition activities, including plan for an orientation to Even Start. Program staff identify timelines for specific transition activities.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Life-Long Learners

2 Program views family members as **life-long learners** and looks for opportunities to engage them in activities beyond the Even Start program.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Planning

3 Staff and families **plan together** for transition support. Transition planning addresses how comprehensive services can continue when service delivery mechanisms or eligibility changes. Transition activities include building familiarity with new settings and new programs.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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TRANSITIONS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Staff Development

4 **Staff development** includes building awareness of cultural influences on learning, interactions, and parenting. Training addresses ways to integrate home culture and school or workplace activities, and strengthens the awareness of other service providers about cultural influences. Staff development includes building awareness of other service delivery systems.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Transitions to School

5 Program prepares for **transitions of children to school** in some specific ways:

a. planning for transition becomes a topic within parenting classes and home visits

b. early childhood programs prepare children directly, including visitations, role playing, and modeling new routines

c. program lets parents know about rights and responsibilities and encourages parental participation in school in a variety of ways

d. program helps parents with ways to deal with children's anxieties

e. program staff establish communication with next teachers to share information about child's developmental progress

f. program staff take proactive role with school staff (and staff from other early childhood programs) to help bridge cultural and language differences, to help staff gain an understanding of parents' involvement, and/or help staff recognize strengths of families who are economically or educationally disadvantaged

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

TRANSITIONS

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Transitions of Adults

8 Program prepares for **transitions of adults** in some specific ways:

a. class time is spent in job readiness skills and discussions of educational and training opportunities

b. program maintains connections with employers and postsecondary institutions to facilitate next steps for adults

c. adults develop a plan for goal attainment, including timeline and resource requirements

d. class time is spent on how to access community services and solve problems.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

Success in School

7 **Children who enter school are successful.** School staff see parents as supportive of children's learning and development. Children and families continue to receive appropriate services such as Title I services, upon school entry, if needed.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Adult Development

8 Adults who receive GEDs seek **additional education** or training or **obtain employment.**

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NOTES

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TRANSITIONS

Adjustments

9 **Program adjusts** to family transitions (e.g., divorce, birth, relocation) that occur within the context of the Even Start program and adjusts program services to meet needs of families during times of transition

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

VERY DESCRIPTIVE				NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE
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NOTES

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

To prepare Even Start staff and staff from collaborating agencies to work effectively with families

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Connected

1 Staff development is explicitly **connected** to the goals of Even Start. Training is provided in Even Start and family literacy philosophies.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Ongoing

2 Staff development is systematic and **ongoing.** Individual activities build on or complement each other.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Training Needs

3 Staff have a role in **identifying training needs.** Staff are involved in planning training. Input about training needs is sought from a variety of sources, including collaborating agencies, parents, evaluation results, advisory groups, and national trends.

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1 2 3 4 5

NOTES

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Variety

4 A **variety of learning** approaches is encouraged, including self-directed learning, mentoring, action research, and peer coaching.

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

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NOTES

Theory and Practice

5 Staff development includes attention to **theory base** as well as **practical** applications in real situations. Training activities build on the knowledge and skills of participants. Staff development includes demonstration and modeling and opportunities to practice new skills for transfer with feedback and coaching as well as adequate time for follow-up after application.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Motivation

8 Some staff development activities are designed to **motivate staff** and build positive attitudes. Most staff development topics are chosen to improve instruction or enhance relationships with families.

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NOTES

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Cultural Issues

7 Some staff development training includes development of sensitivity to **cultural** issues associated with the families served, including understanding one's own cultural identity and biases as well as training in communication skills with families, staff, and community. Staff development includes attention to a **strengths-based approach** to family development, focusing on identifying and building from what a family does well.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Expertise

8 Trainers have **knowledge and experience base** for the content area. Content is up to date.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Training Content

9 **Training for early childhood** includes information about at least one nationally recognized curriculum or model. **Training for adult education** instructors includes methods of teaching beginning learners, ways to address learning disabilities and whole language strategies that include ways of using experiences on a basis for writing and reading.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Cross-Discipline

10 Training is **cross-disciplinary,** i.e., adult educators are trained in early childhood along with early childhood staff and vice versa. Learning approaches use staff's varying routes into the field of family literacy as assets to enrich each other's knowledge, e.g., use of cooperative learning activities.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Collaborating Agencies

11 Staff development includes participants from **collaborating agencies** with training opportunities occurring at multiple sites.

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES

Incentives

12 Program provides **incentives** for participating in staff development including paid time, transportation as required, and advancement potential. Scheduling permits all staff, including part-time staff, to participate in staff development activities.

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1 2 3 4 5

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM SELF-RATING

Evaluation

13 **Evaluation** of staff development addresses benefits and applications, not simply satisfaction

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NOTES

Information Sharing

14 Program creates a mechanism for ongoing **information sharing** among staff. Staff development includes opportunities to reflect on the Even Start program in the context of community needs and ongoing initiatives

VERY DESCRIPTIVE — NOT AT ALL DESCRIPTIVE

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NOTES